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Redevelopment Board Minutes 09/22/2008

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Minutes of September 22, 2008

Members Present: Christopher Loreti
Andrew West
Roland Chaput
Bruce Fitzsimmons
Also Present: Kevin J. O'Brien
Laura Wiener

Andy West called the meeting to order at 7:05 and opened the public hearing on a special permit application to install a wireless communication facility at 37 Drake Road. Paul DeCoste represented the applicant, Metro PCS. Paul DeCoste presented new plans to the board that he hoped would address concerns raised by staff in discussions before the hearing. The new plans showed the cable tray moved to the inside corner of the building and showed three antennae on the roof inside tubes that look like round metal chimneys.

After Paul DeCoste's description, Kevin O'Brien asked if the equipment on the ground was mounted on a concrete pad. Hearing that it was, Kevin O'Brien told the board that his report to them incorrectly mentioned that the equipment was mounted on a metal grate. Chris Loreti asked if the antennae could be placed in the penthouse. Paul DeCoste introduced Bryan Eicens, an RF engineer for Metro PCS, who said that they could not because it would be too close to the other antennae. Chris Loreti then asked how high the antennae were above the roof and was told they were ten feet. He asked if they could be lowered and was told they could probably be lowered to eight feet. Chris Loreti asked if the cabling could be put inside the building and was told that there was not enough room. Chris Loreti asked what the plans were for replacing the tree that would be removed and was told that it would be up to the Housing Authority who owned the site. Chris Loreti then asked if the equipment could be moved to a better location, but Laura Wiener indicated that it was a pretty good location given what was available.

Bruce Fitzsimmons asked if the antennae could be mounted on the side of the building, but was told that they needed to be higher. Bruce Fitzsimmons then asked if they had calculated the radio frequency output for all three antennae that would be on the roof. Brian Innes replied that the total amount would be 1,000 times less than what is permitted.

Roland Chaput said that he didn't want to see the tree cut down and wanted the applicant to look for another solution. Chris Loreti asked how big the facility would be if the equipment were put on the roof and was told it would be the same size as the facility on the ground. Kevin O'Brien asked if the Board was considering a facility on the roof that enclosed the equipment and antenna in a fiberglass enclosure made to look like brick? The Board considered several alternatives. Paul DeCoste asked if they were able to put the equipment in the basement, would the flue pipe cover for the antennae be acceptable and was told it would be.

The Board asked that the applicant return after considering several alternative designs including placement of equipment in the basement or on the roof and asked that the director of the Housing Authority attend the hearing as well. Roland Chaput moved that the Board continue the hearing to October 6 at 7PM in the same meeting room. Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 4 to 0 to approve.

At 7:55 Andy West introduced the discussion of the Symmes Project. Kevin O'Brien reviewed the memo that legal counsel had given the Board which urged the Board to grant Symmes Redevelopment Associates an extension of the time by which they must pull their building permits. Kevin O'Brien said that the draft letter agreement he'd given the Board could be used to grant such an extension and he recommended that they do so. Chris Loreti asked Doug Manz of Symmes Redevelopment Associates if the draft agreement was okay with him and were the dates in it okay. Doug Manz said it was. Chris Loreti indicated that he had hoped counsel's memo would have covered additional options, such as requiring a performance bond from the developer.

Michelle Barry of SNAC said she thought the Town should do whatever is necessary to support the developer in the uncertain credit market. She added that she thought the Town should be working on a plan B in case SRA is not able to go forward. Bruce Fitzsimmons moved that Kevin O'Brien, secretary ex officio, be authorized to sign a letter substantially like the draft to extend the deadline by which Symmes Redevelopment Associates must obtain all building permits to November 7, 2008. Roland Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 4 to 0 to approve.

The Board briefly discussed the review of reports to the ZBA regarding that board's cases. It was decided to forward cases that seemed controversial or important to the Board for their input prior to writing reports.

Andy West asked the Board to approve the minutes of the September 15 meeting. After the Board made some clarifications, Roland Chaput moved that the minutes of the September 15, 2008 meeting be approved. Chris Loreti seconded the motion and the Board voted 4 to 0 to approve.

The Board next looked at the lighting samples to replace the lamps at Broadway Plaza. They also looked at pictures of the lights installed in Brookline and Cambridge. The Board agreed upon the Lumec Serenade light and instructed Kevin O'Brien to follow up with the lighting distributor to get details on the light and pole and base.

The Board discussed schedule and reported on committee activity. The Board discussed potential zoning changes that it might consider for the next Town Meeting. It asked for more information on allowing windmills and photovoltaic installations for generating power and highlighted the problem of determining the use of a property if it generates more power than it uses and consequently sells that power.

The Board adjourned at 9:40.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O'Brien